

Session 11-13, a Regular Meeting of the Homer Advisory Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Minsch at 7:01 p.m. on September 7, 2011 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS BOS, DOLMA, ERICKSON, HIGHLAND, MINSCH, SONNEBORN, VENUTI

STAFF: CITY PLANNER ABOUD  
DEPUTY CITY CLERK JACOBSEN

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was approved by consensus of the Commission.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

The public may speak to the Planning Commission regarding matters on the agenda that are not scheduled for public hearing or plat consideration. (3 minute time limit).

There were no public comments.

### **RECONSIDERATION**

- A. Reconsideration by Commissioner Dolma on the motion to amend HCC 21.60.095 electoral signs may not exceed 16 square feet.

DOLMA/HIGHLAND MOVED TO RECONSIDER THE MOTION TO AMEND HCC 21.60.095 ELECTORAL SIGNS MAY NOT EXCEED 16 SQUARE FEET.

Commissioner Dolma said he wants to make sure everyone understands the effects this ordinance will have and consider the enforcement issues that might be involved.

VOTE: YES: MINSCH, HIGHLAND, SONNEBORN, DOLMA  
NO: BOS, VENUTI, ERICKSON

Motion carried.

### **ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA**

All items on the consent agenda are considered routine and non-controversial by the Planning Commission and are approved in one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless requested by a Planning Commissioner or someone from the public, in which case the item will be moved to the regular agenda and considered in normal sequence.

1. Approval of the August 17, 2011 minutes
2. Time Extension Requests
3. Approval of City of Homer Projects under HCC 1.76.030 g
4. KPB Coastal Management Program Reports
5. Draft Decision and Findings for A Request for a Conditional Use Permit for the Homer Transfer Facility to Construct a ne 9600 sf building at the Borough solid waste site at 3300 Sterling Highway to Consolidate and Bale Solid Waste in Preparation to Transfer to the Central Peninsula

The Consent Agenda was approved by consensus of the Commission.

## PRESENTATIONS

### A. Proposed Sign Code Changes, Rick Abboud, City Planner

City Planner Abboud made his presentation about the sign code changes. It was a summary preview of the amendments scheduled for the public hearing.

## REPORTS

### A. Staff Report PL11-97, City Planner's Report

City Planner Abboud reviewed his staff report.

## PUBLIC HEARINGS

Testimony limited to 3 minutes per speaker. The Commission conducts Public Hearings by hearing a staff report, presentation by the applicant, hearing public testimony and then acting on the Public Hearing items. The Commission may question the public. Once the public hearing is closed the Commission cannot hear additional comments on the topic. The applicant is not held to the 3 minute time limit.

### A. Staff Report PL 11-93 Draft Sign Code Amendments

City Planner Abboud reviewed the staff report.

Dan Smith, city resident and a barber in town, is new to Homer. He received the notice regarding the sign code amendment and there is a lot he doesn't agree with. When he first started here a year ago he sat and waited. He decided to do what he did in Oregon and had a sandwich board made, and his business increased 50% or more. They had a nicer sign made which has brought in more business. He sees that they are taking things away, but wants to know what they propose replacing it with. He has talked with a friend of his who is in a similar position and they have considered leaving. He sees that the Commission has talked about how sandwich boards are pushing the pedestrians and bicycles into traffic. He has never seen that as an issue, he hasn't heard of anyone being hit because of it. The Legends sandwich board sign is about 4 feet off the sidewalk and disturbs no one. It is well designed, brings in a lot of business, and does not impede pedestrian or bicycle traffic.

Scott Fraley, city resident, appreciates that Commission is made up of reasonable people. He is not upset but would like to voice his opinion. He grew up in Homer and appreciates it a lot. It was mentioned that the sandwich boards are in the way and he doesn't think they are, but could be moved to the side if needed. The idea that it is an eyesore is fairly off base. There are plenty of things in the town that are an eyesore, and sandwich boards are the last on that list, yet the Commission chose to make rules about them. What are we doing about Waddell's place at the corner across the street from McDonalds; it's a big eyesore with all the junk. The Cousin's place on the spit, that is a gigantic eyesore and what are we doing about that. This is punishing businesses. Having grown up in this town he has seen friends he graduated with aspire to start a business and here they are being punished. He is curious to know the Commission's mission and their purpose. He would like to see it written out and have the Commission draw their direction from that. They need to help the community flourish and a big part of the community is its businesses. We have plans and dreams as a city that includes things like the public library, and city hall, but how will we fund it if we are shutting down businesses by limiting signage.

Bob Phillips, city resident, commented the biggest eyesore that he saw today was a voting sign of 42 feet when a business can only have 16. People come to Alaska because it is a place where you have a little bit of freedom. You can enjoy your life, and if you don't like it you should go to New York and play with your signs. He thinks this is totally ridiculous, he doesn't see where sandwich boards have interfered with anybody. We have so many ugly buildings on the main drive. This is a town that brings tourists in and it could be an eye appealing town. There are so many empty stores that need paint, the eyesore is on the spit where the boats are, and he doesn't see tourists complaining about signs on buildings out there. They are coming here to enjoy the city. The people who are complaining are the ones who don't have businesses and drive around drinking their lattes. What about grandfather rights on signs that are already up? Do they have to come down? Does our opinion really matter, or are minds already made up? He sees City signs that are oversized, like the one going into the dog catcher area. So will you take it down and re-do it? We need to make our town presentable and work on the visual problems we have instead of hurting businesses. The country's economy is falling apart and he doesn't think we need to add to the problem.

Adrienne Sweeney, city resident, commented that her family has owned businesses in Homer for over 80 years and her great grandmother would be appalled at the anti business attitude and regulations that keep cropping up in this town. Mrs. Sweeney has 18 employees who depend on her to survive. Over just a few years Homer has succeeded in regulating the canneries and the jobs that went with it out of this town, increased the cost of water to businesses over 100% in one year, and now more federal regulations are hurting our charter boat businesses. She believes that every small business in Homer is struggling right now and with the way our economy is going, things are not looking good. We do not need more sign regulations right now to hurt our businesses. Right now we need the City to help small businesses survive so we can keep providing jobs in this community. In this economy we should be thinking of ways to stimulate growth in the business community, not creating regulations that are going to hinder businesses. She said she checked with the police department and they have not had a single accident, injury, or safety complaint that they can find a record of. She believes that it is an excuse to get rid of sidewalk signs that help bring business into the small businesses. Nor does she see how limiting on or off premise vehicle signage to four hours a day at a time helps the community. Right now our charter boat operators are struggling and those folks have signs on vehicles they park on the spit when they go out on 12 plus hour days. She is ashamed they are punishing a charter boat operator who is trying to make a living and provide jobs for the community. She is ashamed at the proposal and said the Commission did not do their research. She adamantly opposes both of these proposals and supports anything that helps small business.

Chair Minsch acknowledged that the four hour vehicle parking issue relates to parking regulations in the harbor and will look to clarify the vehicle signage information.

Robert Carpenter, city resident, commented that one thing that needs to be looked at with signage is that it is all about business. Without business, Homer can blow away because without business, people don't show up. We can't eat, pay our taxes, or our utilities. Without advertisement, businesses are word of mouth and he doesn't think we are back in the 1800's where everyone talks to everyone about where they got their hair cut. We look at signs, internet, and telephone books because we are looking for the quick and easy way to get there. He agrees that any sign in the roadway causing traffic problems is a safety issue, but if it is in the grass or not in the direct right-of-way, then the driver did the wrong thing by

pulling into the traffic. He found the proposed solution interesting, where sandwich signs are focused on civic events, political advertisements, or for sale or rent sign. He appreciates that for sale or rent signs or civic events do drum up business, but he doesn't see how politician's signs support that. The information says 14 of 90 days are when he can put his sign out. It is .16 of a working quarter and is not very good. There are 14 units in the building he is in so he gets 10 square feet to advertise. Most of the units are empty because they can't advertise. It is something to think about. If you take away advertisement, you take away business, and once again, you take away the people.

Mike Barth, local State Farm agent, commented that he drives the truck with the logos all over it. He acknowledged Chair Minch's comments but the way he reads the information, it seems clear that he can't park his truck in the parking lot of his office for more than four hours. It is completely ridiculous. For him it is a huge objection. He will trust the Commission is going to look at it. He agrees with a lot of people here that the sandwich boards are something we use to drive traffic into our business. He tracks his clients and asks where business comes from and it overwhelmingly comes from the signage out side his building letting people know he is there. It has made an impact for him, as he has only been open three months. For him personally not having the sign would be a detriment to his business. Part of the solution would be state where the signs can be put to avoid safety concerns. He has heard that it cost money and time to regulate it, but he questions what the education has been. He was here three months before he was told what he could do with his sign. It took about five minutes of staff time and the problem was taken care of relatively quickly. He wonders about getting information to new businesses, perhaps something in the chamber welcome packet.

Fred Kaatz, owns the business Stay Tan on Lake Street with his wife. When they opened in December they contacted planning staff to ask specifically what they could and could not do. Based on what he was told he spent about \$700 on a professionally made sandwich board. Not too long after he put it out, they were told it couldn't be in the right-of-way, which takes them 15 feet or more off the street. Originally they were told it couldn't be in the sidewalk and it was three feet off that. The only problem they have had with their sign is that the wind blows it over. His point is that without the sign his business would have had a much slower growth than it has. Now they are told they can only have one sign out there at a time, and there are multiple businesses there. The signs aren't in harms way, they are there to promote business which pays the taxes. Businesses produce, government does not produce. We pay the salary of government and without that, we all know the scenario. He was also told the very person that gave the authority to place the sign there and said he had to move the sign didn't have the authority to tell him to put it there in the first place. It is rather upsetting. The bottom line is they have kept the sign there and have waited an opportunity to address this, and as another gentleman pointed out to allow a sign for 14 of 90 days is ridiculous. There is enough to do in running businesses, maintaining organization and supplies, without having to check off how many days the sign has been out front because of some law that business owners feel is cumbersome, silly, and ridiculous. He thinks the Commission could spend their time on things of much more value to the community. In fairness, allowing a sign to be proportionate to a building is very reasonable, but the rest of the stuff is a burden to business owners.

Karen Austermuhl, with Magic Touch Massage, moved to Homer in May, opened her business in June. She had the same business in Fairbanks. She never had a sign when she was there, all she had to do was put a couple websites up as it is a community of young people who look up

message on their cell phones and her website comes up. In Homer more people are middle aged who use signs, which she found out the hard way. In the beginning she couldn't figure out why she wasn't getting much business. She put up a sign and people started coming in. When she would meet people who had come to Fairbanks from Homer and ask why they were there, those young people had to leave Homer and go to Fairbanks for work, which is sad because this is a beautiful place with really nice people. To her it looks like this is being turned into a retirement community, not a thriving place for young people to plan to live their life and raise families. Homer is depending on high taxes, where there were none in Fairbanks. If there were more businesses the city could tax less. When she asks people how they found out about her business, 90% of them say I saw your sign when I drove by. She hopes her business thrives and she makes it here. Political signs should be banned, not small business signs.

Kevin Fraley, city resident, makes signs for a living as he owns Printworks and Alaska Sign Express. He finds more and more that he makes a lot of his living outside of Homer because Homer is very anti-sign. It is bothersome to him in the current economic climate, this is yet another advance on businesses thriving. He knows they are not elected and some own businesses trying to make a living in the community as well. He thanked them for their public service as he knows they are doing this as a service to the community. But what they are doing with the sign restriction is not helping the community. Others have made suggestions about things to enhance the community. It would be refreshing to see a city government work hand in hand with the business to grow a community, and develop resources for the government to exist. This is not what you're doing. This is hindering businesses, it is an anti-business ordinance. It is an infringement and restriction on business owners being able to do what they do, which is to generate revenue, pay employees, pay taxes, and pay our city government that is struggling to fund itself. Deficits and struggling governments seem to be a problem across our nation. It is shocking to him they can't see this is the kind of thing that causes that. We need to think about the trash and vehicles that are piling up in front of homes and businesses. He can understand restricting signs to create certain flavor in a community but a lot of this is not true with the issues of the sandwich boards.

Joan Philips came here in 1950 and homesteaded. Her kids own the Time Bandit, they have the store on the spit and in town. They build Land's End and the first boardwalk. She thinks they should leave the boardwalks alone. They draw a lot of tourists, people expect there to be signs out there and it to be funky looking, because that is what they are coming for. She thinks they are taking away an atmosphere to make it be little tiny signs and things like that. She thinks we came here to be free and not to be over regulated. Her question to the Commission is if they are going to listen and hear what has been said. She appreciates the work they are doing, but they need to hold it in their heart and conscience to listen to what people are saying. She feels kind of tired of Homer when they put things to vote, the people vote, and then a few people in power don't let it happen. That is very wrong. She hopes Homer can be a place that grows, is unique, and not be over regulated. She talks to people from all over the world who love it here and don't say that signs are too big. They say it is unique and wonderful.

Rob Hyslip, owner of a boardwalk on the spit, agrees with some things that have been said about the eyesores on the spit, the old boats and what not. While he doesn't appreciate all the stuff there, he goes down the spit all the time in the summer and there are people constantly taking pictures. They want different; part of it is the scenic beauty of the mountains and glaciers, and part of it a bunch of derelict boats on the spit that is not like

their homes. The signs are not a hazard; the tourists are more of a hazard. It's cool though, it is what they are here for. Many people here in the summer are not the local residents, the locals know where the businesses are, but the people who come here on vacation are depending on signs. He agrees that we don't want a bunch of giant billboards all over the place because we don't want to look like where they are from. It is important to be able to have signs so people can find places. It is good to have regulations, but let's not regulate ourselves into the ground.

Marie Bader, city resident, commented that there is a sticker that says "Homer, were here, because were not all there." She finds a lot of solace in that sticker. The businesses around here that want to put out a little sandwich board, God bless 'em. It's the summer, put them out. It isn't a safety hazard. She gets a little irritated though with temporary fly by night businesses that zoom in for the weekend with four or five sandwich boards, then they are gone. Do they have to go to planning office to find out what the ordinance is? Regarding the flapping banners, she has a banner and she doesn't want it banner to flap. But we have wind here and can't help it if our banners flap. She would hate to get zapped for a flapping banner. Lastly she commented that she would like to paint her building to avoid the signage, with care, like some other buildings have done. She noted the halibut on Bob's Trophy Charters. He probably doesn't have to worry about a sign as his whole wall is one. These are just things to think about. And again, Homer, were here, because were not all there, and she doesn't want to be a Time Square.

Jackie Dentz, owner of Frosty Bear Ice Cream Parlor on the spit, said she drove the spit yesterday and found every single business out there, with the exception of Finn's Pizza, is not in compliance according to the rules as they read. The spit is a fairy land of unique businesses and tourist attractions. Why would you want to slap the hand that feeds by making so many rules to further handicap businesses? These brave owners who operate for the city's financial benefit, collecting and paying taxes, have a very limited time frame, experience this reality of economic depression and horrific weather to work around, the recent events of losing 1/3 of our charter fleet, not to mention going to one fish allocation, and living daily with the possibility of a tsunami that would eliminate all business on the spit. The city obviously can not and does not enforce current codes, so why do you want to make more, and why attack the spit, a huge revenue resource in the continuing failing debacle of sign code enforcement. Unless you walk in her shoes, you have no idea what she endures as a business owner in this little man eating hamlet by the sea. They need to know she works very hard to pay her taxes, collect sales tax, be in compliance with state and federal mandates, labor laws, ABC Board regulations, DEC mandates, Workman's comp, all consuming audits, plus insurance after insurance. All these take her money and now they are spending the money she is earning for the city foolishly in the fact that we are even having this meeting. She agrees regulations are important to a point, but they have overstepped their bounds. What she wants to point out is that a very important thing happened this summer that needs to be addressed, a false alarm for a tsunami. Not one person did anything but point fingers. When they thought there was an emergency, no one knew how to evacuate the spit. The city needs an evacuation plan, she lives and works out there and doesn't know what the plan is, but all traffic should become one way off the spit, the police should have put up barricades to stop on going flow. They don't have their priorities in the right place. This is pushing people out of business. And as an aside the DOT should put a turnout for people to take pictures of Cousin's boat.

Cherise Hyslip, boardwalk owner on the spit and also an artist, commented she knows that with art there is a huge opinion of what is and is not an eyesore and she considers her signs

the same. We have thousands of people taking pictures of our quaint little fishing village, it is beautiful. There are times when banners flap, like after the 50 mph winds from the previous night. Their banners flew down, but they are back up straight today. She asked the Commission to please work with the business owners. It is so hard to make a living as a small business owner, so please help us.

Bill Smith commented that in the past the City did erect a sign which was contrary to the height and size limits enacted by City, and after pressure from a specific planning commissioner, the sign was removed. The City is not exempt from its own sign regulations in his opinion. 16 sf for political signs would be great in his opinion. When addressing banners and flapping, they are defining a banner as one that's attached to a rigid structure along the circumference, but don't say that banner material has to be attached. In dealing with building signs on line 48, he thinks it should say it means a sign that is attached to and/or supported by the building. Line 74-76, ground sign basically says when sign people put up a sign they may not put a solid foundation and only a skirting giving the appearance of a solid foundation. That's why he put that original language is in there. The marquee sign language is unclear so they can review it and think about it. Line 96 off premise signs has been discussed before because the real word is premises when you are talking about a building or a place. It is used differentially throughout the document. Public signs, staff suggest retaining the intent and language of public sign, which we put in the sign code to allow the business on Pioneer or Old Town to erect in the public right-of-way a directional sign where certain parts of the community may be located that may otherwise be bypassed going to the spit. Line 116 he likes staff's suggested substitute. He doesn't see a definition for roof signs, and there is code about them. Perhaps not even distinguish between interval roof signs and roof signs at all. The graph addresses free standing sign may not exceed 10 feet in height, and interpretation in other parts the 10 feet calculates from the road grade, which can result in signs exceeding dimensional requirements other businesses are allowed to have.

Al Waddell, city resident, introduced himself as the guy who owns that crazy corner. There are six wonderful acres that his family has owned for 58 years, along with 2.1 acres behind the post office. The rest of it is long gone, sold off to pay taxes and take care of things. He understands the definition of government is to do something for the people they can not do for themselves. "We the people", he firmly believes we all understand where that comes from. He and most here firmly believe we do not need anymore restrictions on our chances to do business in Homer. Signs are a necessary part of business. When he bought his signs, he heard a neat slogan; a sign with no business is a sign of no business. Whether it's a blow up snowman at Christmas, which they were told was illegal after it had been up for 18 years, are they going to be allowed to have Christmas trees or things like that on their property? We don't need anymore government trying to run our business, times are tough enough. Most, if not all, people here try to do business and pay taxes to help pay City of Homer wages to their workers. This year his business's gross is equivalent to the year 2000. Taxes, water bills, light bills, freight, propane, gas, and food bills all have soared in these past 11 years. He and his wife received their 2011 tax bill for \$26,871 for property tax, and guess what? They don't have it. They will have to pay the penalty and huge interest charge this year but will pay their mortgage, probably by melting the jewelry in the store. Do you really think they need more restrictions? After 58 years of ownership of their property, they quit. All the property is for sale.

Michelle Barling, owns Ocean View RV and Gift Shop, and also Jelly Beans with her mother. They have a sandwich sign in front of their business. The RV Park has 100 sites that are full in

June and July with an average 2 day stay. They promote businesses through town and with the sandwich board sign they are able to pull in more business. This new ordinance would hinder their business. We need to pull together and work together as a community, not be hindered and separated, especially with the economy the way it is. She hopes the Commission has listened to everyone and hopes they will take it to heart. We are all in the same boat as one community.

Chip Duggan, city resident, commented that he just bought his third business, and he doesn't know why. He questioned why it is safe to have sandwich boards for political signs and for sale signs, but not safe for anyone else. And how can a Realtor go and advertise all over town with every for sale sign they have. He said he has a lot of realtor friends who won't like that he said that, but oh well.

There were no further comments and Chair Minsch closed the public hearing, with the comment that there will be another one scheduled in the near future.

MINSCH/ERICKSON MOVED TO TAKE THE DRAFT SIGN ORDINANCE BACK TO A WORKSESSION FOR MORE DISCUSSION BEFORE THE NEXT PUBLIC HEARING IS SCHEDULED.

There was brief discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

#### **PLAT CONSIDERATION**

##### **A. Staff Report PL 11-94, Tietjen Lot F-2 Subdivision Preliminary Plat**

City Planner Abboud reviewed the staff report. He corrected that Dmitri D. Kimbrell, RLS is the surveyor for this plat, not Roger Imhoff, RLS.

VENUTI/BOS MOVED FOR ADOPTION OF STAFF REPORT PL 11-94 TIETJEN LOT F-2 SUBDIVISION PRELIMINARY PLAT WITH STAFF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

There was brief discussion that everything seems to be in order.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

##### **B. Staff Report PL 11-95, Anderson 1980 Sub L&J Addition Preliminary Plat**

City Planner Abboud reviewed the staff report.

There was discussion that the applicants are trying to correct an issue of the house encroaching onto the next lot and address the utility easement.

BOS/VENUTI MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT PL 11-95, ANDERSON 1980 SUB L&J PRELIMINARY PLAT WITH STAFF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.



Comment was made that the applicants seem to be doing the best they can with the situation and are working with staff to do it right.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

## **PENDING BUSINESS**

- A. Reconsideration by Commissioner Dolma on the motion to amend HCC 21.60.095 electoral signs may not exceed 16 square feet.

HIGHLAND/BOS MOVED TO AMEND 21.60.095 ELECTORAL SIGNS MAY NOT EXCEED 16 SQUARE FEET.

Commissioner Dolma expected to hear that people wanted the larger signs, but it sounds like the preference is small political signs.

Commissioner Venuti expressed concern of back lash from politicians as Homer already has a reputation of being hippy flakes, and it may cause issue to limit sizes of political signs. We would be the only city in Alaska he knows of restricting the size of electoral signs.

Commissioner Sonneborn said she doesn't see how we could get any more backlash from the Borough politicians than we already do and we should vote for or against this out of fear.

Commissioner Bos questioned if this would send a message to the politicians hoping to get and educate voters in Homer about their issues, or will they even bother with us anymore. By making signs smaller, it is kind of an offensive thing to be doing.

Chair Minsch commented in the beginning she didn't want to take up the issue, but listening to the public testimony, they want the signs they want for themselves, but a number of people commented the political signs are excessive. There will opportunity for be more public testimony. We are telling the public and businesses that we have a sign Homer has a sign code trying to keep signs controlled and the city looking nice, and she thinks it is unfair to let the politicians have the great big signs when the rest of us have to conform. The sign code is designed to preserve and protect the visual quality of Homer.

Commissioner Erickson wonders if this is something worth taking on, in light of everything else that is coming in their faces. Maybe we should look at it once we get past the political season.

There was discussion that there will be more opportunity for public comment on this and it is easier to work on the sign code as a whole.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

A. Staff Report PL 11-98, Planning Commission Work List

City Planner Abboud reviewed his staff report and the items he added to the work list for the Commission to consider.

The Commission discussed the work list items and made no changes to what was presented.

**INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS**

A. City Manager's Report dated August 22, 2011

**COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE**

Members of the audience may address the Commission on any subject. (3 minute time limit)

There were no audience comments.

**COMMENTS OF STAFF**

There were no staff comments.

**COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION**

Commissioner Venuti said it was a good meeting and it was great to see people show up. He said he would like the City to send him to Fairbanks for the Planning Conference.

Commissioner Dolma thanked the audience for participating tonight.

Commission Bos comment that the was glad to see that amount of emotion and he noted quite a few of the folks wondered why are aren't being more proactive with cleaning up Homer, so he wants to remind everyone we need to continue on with the cleaning of derelict cars and those kinds of things. It was a great meeting.

Commissioner Sonneborn said it was interesting to have so much comment from the community, it was a good meeting.

Commissioner Erickson commented that she appreciates all the business people coming. She knows that it hard to be in business for themselves. She appreciated what they had to say and hopes they come away feeling that we care about them and want to see them succeed in the way we go through the sign ordinance.

Commissioner Highland said she is a little more thin skinned. This is her first meeting to have those kinds of comments. The people clapping and some of the comments made her feel a little abused. She wonders if there is a way to set the tone to let them know we are volunteers doing a difficult job and ask them politely not to clap. She felt abused. She didn't mind hearing the comments but the way they were presented was so accusatory and judgmental. She would like to find a way that she doesn't have to sit and be abused, and if there isn't a way then she won't be lasting very long because she doesn't do well with that.

Chair Minsch said it is up to the Chair to set the tone of the meeting and things like this don't happen very often. The audience was pretty well behaved for as strongly as they feel about this. It seemed that not many of them read the ordinance and don't have all of the

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information, so they are angry at the Commission for making this stuff up and being mean. We will work with staff to get better explanations between existing code and new code and it may take a couple worksessions to get through it. Right now business is tight in town and Franco has raised the issue of business friendly while we have been talking about it and we knew this was going to come. The people are struggling to make a living to make a living and they don't mean to be mean to us. Chair Minsch explained that tonight chose not to engage with the audience because they were here to be listened to, and the Commission listened. They need to go back through the ordinance and try to get the public better educated on what they are doing.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for September 21, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers.

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MELISSA JACOBSEN, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_